



Newsletter June 2022

Blind Quarters and Summer Mastitis

With the days getting warmer and the shift to t-shirt weather underway, it seems a fitting time to talk about summer mastitis.

Summer mastitis is defined as an intramammary infection of the non-lactating udder seen in warmer months, basically, it is a problem for your dry cows and your maiden heifers.

The main bacteria that cause summer mastitis is *Trueperella pyogenes*, but *Streptococcus dysgalactiae*, *Peptococcus indolicus* and *Fusobacterium necrophorum* are often also involved in the disease process and can worsen the damage to the udder.

The head fly (*Hydrotaea irritans*) is the main vector of this disease as they carry the bacteria between cows. However, teat damage through irritation or trauma, or that one pesky cow in the herd that goes round sucking teats, can also cause outbreaks of this costly disease.

Summer mastitis is usually quite acute and can lead to death due to the toxic nature of the disease if it is not identified and treated rapidly. Treatment is aimed at saving the cow and its unlikely that the affected quarter will be saved. Conversely, sometimes the disease goes unnoticed in heifers and leads to them calving in with blind quarters. Outbreaks of the disease can be seen, which is incredibly frustrating and costly. As with every disease prevention is better than the cure so here are our top three tips for reducing summer mastitis:

Fly Control

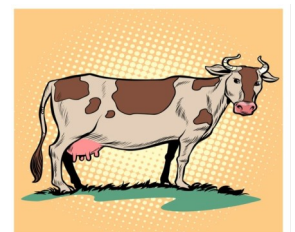
Reducing nuisance fly numbers will reduce the risk of them carrying the bacteria from udder to udder. There are numerous ways to reduce fly numbers. This includes chemical control (pour ons, sprays, ear tags) or biological control using friendly flies (parasitic wasps).

Pasture Management

Flies love to congregate in certain areas of your fields, including under trees and along the hedgerows; places your cows also love to go for some shade when it gets hot! Additional risks come from fields with thistle growth or poached areas. Try to avoid problem fields, or at least avoid overstocking them.

Teat Sealant (including your heifers!)

Teat sealant provides a physical barrier to prevent bacteria on the teat from traveling up the teat canal and causing the infection in the first place. Applying sealant to maiden heifers also has shown to be protective. If this is not something you already do, please speak to any of our vets about exploring this idea, as it is not without risk.



Worm Control—Check Before You Treat

Cattle will have been out at grass a good while now and thoughts will be turning to worm control. Before you go taking time out of your day to get a load of cattle in and drench them for worms why not pick a bit of fresh dung up and drop it in for a faecal worm egg count to see if they need worming at all. Overuse of wormers can lead to the development of anthelmintic resistance so wormers eventually become ineffective. Using wormers only when you need to saves you money, time and saves treatment options for when you truly need them. In addition, many wormers containing ivermectin based products kill more than just the worms in the cattle having a detrimental effect on dung beetles. Dung beetles are responsible for breaking down dung and therefore making the nutrients in the dung more available to the grass plant, reducing sour areas of grass that cattle reject, dung beetles prey on parasitic larvae thus reducing the worm burden to your cattle and they prey on fly larvae reducing the fly burden to cattle through the summer months.

Test before you treat!

Avoid Ivermectin based products whilst at grass where possible. (Remember all the beneficial effects that dung beetles have on pasture quality and reduced parasite burden!)

Walk behind a group of cattle in the paddock and collect fresh dung from them as they walk away/ come towards you. Aim to collect from approximately 5 animals. This can be collected in gloves and dropped into us in gloves/sandwich bags or old butter tubs.

Don't spend money and time on wormer when you don't need to!

Stock Supplies

There is a national issue with sourcing of Oxytet products eg **Alamycin LA 300** or **Engemycin DD**.

One alternative for now (until it runs out...) is HEXASOL LA. This is Oxytet AND Finadyne in combination so will work well for Calf pneumonia.

Please speak to a vet for suitable alternatives for Calf pneumonia and other problems where Oxytet is used eg Sheep lameness.

As always, prevention is better than cure and relying on antibiotics. Perhaps now is a good time to review your use of Respiratory or Foot Rot vaccines. Speak to a Vet for more information.

Artificial Insemination Course

3 day DIY-AI course, held at the practice and a dairy farm near Weston Super Mare.

£400 + VAT

15th, 16th, 17th June 2022

Foot Trimming Course

2 day beginners Foot Trimming Course, held at the practice and a dairy farm near Bridgwater.

£250 + VAT

New Dates 6th and 21st July 2022

MilkSure ✓

We are running a MilkSure course in the next few months. This is a requirement for Saputo and Barber's farms and covers all Red Tractor medicines course requirements. It is a training and stewardship programme for dairy farmers on the use of veterinary medicines. MilkSure training improves the professionalism around medicine use on dairy farms and drives higher standards. This helps avoid medicine residues and reduces antibiotic resistance. Date to be confirmed, so look out for details in the next news letter!